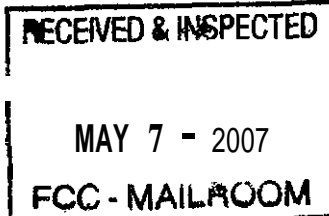




Northern Enterprises Inc.

May 5, 2007

Marlene H. Dortch
Commission Secretary
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
9300 East Hampton Drive
Capital Heights, MD 20743



DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL 02-60

Dear Secretary Dortch:

Enclosed please find Northern Enterprises application for the Rural Health Care Pilot Program. Vermont is the **most rural** State in the country. In areas of our State individuals must drive hours to reach their community hospitals. Care standards are high, yet these hospitals are faced with lower State reimbursement costs and large costs increases due to the high cost of heating fuels. Having the ability to provide healthcare training and other types of telemedicine programs would be an effective way to reduce costs and enhance services.

The very rural and mountainous nature of Vermont prevents Vermont hospitals from obtaining quality and quantity Rber to meet the ever-changing technology in the health care industry. Health care is at the core of a sustainable community, one that is vital for the economic development stability of our six counties.

We are requesting \$25 million dollars to connect more than five hospitals within the State of Vermont. Thank you for the opportunity to submit this proposal and we hope it receives a favorable review.

Sincerely,

Connie Stanley-Little
Connie Stanley-Little
Executive Director

cc: **Ericka Olsen**
Thomas Buckley
Jeremy Marcus

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Northern
Enterprises, Inc.

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North-Link Application

Section

1

FCC Pilot Program Requirements

Federal Communications Docket Number
WC Docket No. 02-60

North-Link Ownership Structure

North-Link, of Northern Enterprises Inc., is a 400 mile fiberoptic backbone, with a minimum of 144 strands, whose goal is to network hospitals, healthcare providers and ancillary services with dedicated buffered strands to enhance telemedicine programs. The four District community hospitals have created a consortium to collaborate with North-Link to operate telemedicine programs that will be supported by the fiber optic network.

Northern Enterprises Inc. (NE), a 501(c)3 organization will be the recipient of the FCC funding and will include project Implementation and management, financial management and administration and reporting. Among other funding sources, NE has been awarded \$3 million by the U. S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration for the construction of North-Link.

NE, is a non-profit organization in partnership with the Economic Development Council of Northern Vermont, (EDCNV), a designated District of the Economic Development Administration (EDA) since 1967. EDCNV represents the six northern counties of Vermont: Caledonia, Essex, Franklin, Grand Isle, Lamoille and Orleans. EDCNV has extensive expertise and experience in administering Federal and State grant programs, e.g. EDA, USDA, EPA, HUD, SEA.

Goals and Objectives

The Health Care Industry leads the EDCNV District not only as an economic engine, but also as an industry that drives technological advances within the region. All of the District hospitals will be investing in Photo Archiving Systems (PAS), which is a process for transmitting digitizing photos over a virtually private fiber network (VPN).

Photo Archiving System capabilities between primary healthcare provider and community hospitals and their tertiary care centers.

ePACS Benefits:

- Improved access to diagnostic-quality images
- Improved capability to read multi-slice CT and MRI images
- Simultaneous access to images by multiple providers in different locations
- Elimination of repeat studies necessitated by unavailability of images
- Enhanced ability to compare cases
- Ability to read from remote locations
- Virtually eliminates dependence on film management



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Virtual Intensive Care Units

- Provide 24/7/365 physician monitoring for rural community hospital Intensive care

Teleconferencing

- Expand Continuing education credit opportunities
- Global access to conferences

. Health Care Facilities Connected by North-Link: and RUCA Number

North-Link will directly connect:

Copley Hospital
528 Washington Highway, Morrisville, VT 05661
(802) 888-8888
RUCA Code: 500159575.00

North Country Hospital
189 Prouty Drive, Newport, VT 05855
(802) 334-7331
RUCA Code: 500159515.00

Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital
1315 Hospital Drive, St. Johnsbury, VT 05819
(802) 524-5911
RUCA Code: 500059575.00

Northwestern Medical Center
133 Fairfield Street, St. Albans VT 05478
(802) 748-8141
RUCA Code: 500110108.00

North-Link will connect through lease arrangements
Fletcher Allen Hospital
111 Colchester Avenue, Burlington, VT 05401
(802) 847-2345
RUCA code: 500070007.00

Porter Medical Center
1145 Porter Drive, Middlebury, VT 05753
(802) 388-4701
RUCA code: 500019608.00

Rutland Regional Medical Center
160 Allen Street, Rutland, VT 05701
(802) 7757111
RUCA Code: 500219633.00

Chaplain Valley Physicians Hospital
75 Beekman Street, Plattsburgh, NY 12901
RUCA Code: 360191010.00



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Pricing for the outside plant maintenance should be about \$71,000 per year or right about \$59,000 per month. The maintenance cost is projected to include contract coverage 24/7/365 per year, and a monthly set aside for repairs caused by severe weather conditions or other forms of service interruption.

*****Annual cost under runs will be transferred to North-Link's capital budget and North-Link's revenue is designated for further expansion.**

Financial Participation /Sustainability of North-Link

North-Link will lease fiber to institutions, state and federal agencies and for-profit telecommunication service providers. Revenue received from the network will be utilized to maintain the network and to continue to build out throughout Vermont's underserved areas.

Network Design/Engineering

North-Link's design utilizes a 'ring/sub-ring' design with no more than 15% of the total network being constructed of lateral spurs off of the ring(s). The design utilizes existing fiber optic cables where available and financially feasible and will link: area businesses, EDA-funded industrial parks, health care facilities, first responders, educational institutes as well as law enforcement and Federal/State government facilities. North-Link is an open access network available to all telecommunications service providers on an equitable basis. North-Link's alliance with utilities owning existing infrastructure to negotiate make-ready fees on utility pole has created an opportunity to provide a rural state of the art fiber optic network while maximizing construction dollars.

North-Link's Financial Support For Network Construction

North-Link's Construction Funding		
\$9.7 Million Dollar Construction Budget		
Project Dollars	Funding Source	Status
\$ 3.0 Million	U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Association	Grant Committed
\$ 2.1 Million	Vermont Electric Cooperative	Contribution Committed
\$1.6 Million	State of Vermont	Appropriation Committed
\$ 500,000	Sen. Leahy - Housing and Urban Development Earmark	Grant Committed
\$100,000	The Fund	Loan Committed
\$2.6	Request from Federal Communication Commission Telemedicine Pilot Program	Applied



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North-Link's Construction Schedule/Status

- **Phase One of North-Link**, (approximately 75 miles) construction start date is June 4, 2007. The remaining phases, encompassing the remaining 325 miles to built by 2009.
- All Federal Environmental Impact, including historic/archeological preservation, fish and wildlife impact review is complete.
- Permits for highway access for State and Town highway are complete.
- Rail crossing permits are filed and pending.
- State of Vermont Department of Public Service Certificate of Public Good - Approved
- Verizon Pole Attachment Agreement -- **Approved**.

Project Management Team

Executive Director: Connie Stanley-Little has been with EDCNV for 25 years and has served as the Executive Director for ten years (previously having held the position of Associate Director for EDCNV). During Ms. Stanley-Little's tenure the Council expanded the revolving loan fund program to include two additional micro loan funds. Ms. Stanley-Little developed the Council's Technical Assistance Program for small business. This program is responsible for the high rate of successful loans and the significant increase in loans generated for small business entrepreneurs.

Under her leadership the Council developed the Vermont Food Venture Center (VFVC), a shared-use commercial kitchen for food producers. VFVC is one of the only self-sustaining shared-use kitchens in the country and is sought for its unprecedented expertise in the industry. VFVC has been in operation since June 1998 and is one of the catalysts for growth within Vermont's food industry. VFVC plays a vital role in the food industry and agriculture diversification.

Ms. Stanley-Lime also developed the Development Director position. The Development Director role provides technical assistance to District communities, while implementing economic and community development initiatives that increase employment opportunities and improve the standard of living for the District's citizens. Additional responsibilities include program and project management, CEDS oversight, financial and budget management, community relations, economic development planning, board liaison, portfolio management, oversight of the Vermont Food Venture Center and North-Link and the revolving loan funds expansion.

Development Director/North-Link Project Manager: Maureen Connolly is responsible for the development of the North-Link project, a fiber optic network, which encompasses more than 400 miles within the District. As Development Director she is responsible for the growth and implementation of economic and community development projects, update of the annual Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy and technical assistance. Ms. Connolly has twenty-two years of experience in project development including design, permitting, procurement, labor standards and construction management. Ms. Connolly spent five years as a business consultant for national and international consulting agencies and has been with EDCNV for 6 years.

Fiscal Officer: Tammy Underwood is responsible for financial record keeping, including payroll and tax reporting, quarterly and yearly statement submission to state and federal funding agencies. The Fiscal Officer is also responsible for coordinating financial information and assisting in the annual audit review of the corporations. Ms. Underwood duties also involve grant coordination and administration. Ms. Underwood has 15 years in the financial field managing programs in lending, collections, auditing, and bank regulation training. Ms. Underwood has been with EDCNV for 10 years.

Operations & Maintenance: Adesta, LLC. is contracted to maintain the network operations

